

Message Text

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TO USDEL SECRETARY IMMEDIATE

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SUBJECT: INTERVIEW BY JERRY O'LEARY OF WASHINGTON STAR
FOR PAUL BARBIAN FROM S/PRS
HEREWITH FULL TEXT O'LEARY INTERVIEW WITH SECRETARY DECEMBER
24 AS EDITED BY WASHINGTON STAR. STAR PLANS TO PUBLISH IN-
TERVIEW IN SUNDAY, DECEMBER 28, EDITION:

BEGIN TEXT: "SECRETARY OF STATE HENRY A. KISSINGER HAS BEEN
AT THE CENTER OF A COLOSSAL ARRAY OF DIPLOMATIC EVENTS --
WAR, REVOLUTION, TRIUMPH -- SINCE TAKING OVER THE NATIONAL
SECURITY COUNCIL AND RELATED ASSIGNMENTS IN 1969. TO SOME,
HE IS SEEN AS THE LIGHTNING ROD OF THESE STORMY TIMES -- A
GATHERING POINT OF INTENSITIES, ENERGIES AND CONTROVERSY.
TO MANY, HE IS THE STORM-MAKER -- A GENERATOR OF SWIRLING
EMOTIONS, IDEAS AND DEBATE. TO OTHERS, HE IS THE STORM
ITSELF. KISSINGER DISCUSSES HERE WITH WASHINGTON STAR STAFF
WRITER JEREMIAH O'LEARY SOME OF THE ATTITUDES WHICH HE
BRINGS TO THIS COMPLEX PICTURE.

"Q: YOU ARE SEEN IN DIFFERENT WAYS BY DIFFERENT PEOPLE.
HOW DO YOU SEE YOUR OWN ROLE AS DIRECTOR OF AMERICAN
FOREIGN POLICY?

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"KISSINGER: WELL, OBVIOUSLY IN THIS JOB ALL THE PERCEP-
TIONS ARE HEIGHTENED, BECAUSE THERE ARE ALWAYS MORE PROB-
LEMS TO DEAL WITH THAN YOU CAN POSSIBLY ADDRESS. AND
THEREFORE I SUPPOSE BOTH THE EXHILARATION AND THE FRUSTRA-

TION ARE GREATER THAN IT CAN BE IN ANY COMPARABLE JOB, EXCEPT PERHAPS THE PRESIDENCY. BUT IN GENERAL, THROUGHOUT MY LIFE, I HAVE ALWAYS LOOKED FOR OPPORTUNITIES TO DO THE THINGS I BELIEVED IN. AND I HAVE NEVER TAKEN JOBS JUST FOR INCOME. AS A RESULT, I THINK THOSE PEOPLE WHO HAVE WORKED WITH ME HAVE GENERALLY FOUND THAT I DO THEM RATHER INTENSELY. I LIKE NOT TO DO THINGS THAT ARE NOT WORTH DOING INTENSELY.

"Q: IF YOU WERE NOT HENRY KISSINGER, WOULD YOU SAY THAT YOU WERE A NICE GUY?

"KISSINGER: I WOULD SAY I AM CERTAINLY A COMPLICATED MAN.

"Q: ALL MEMBERS OF THE HUMAN RACE ARE COMPLICATED. IN WHAT WAY ARE YOU UNIQUELY COMPLICATED?

"KISSINGER: TO GO BACK TO YOUR PREVIOUS QUESTION, I DON'T KNOW WHETHER 'NICE' IS A VERY PRECISE ATTRIBUTE. I THINK I AM A REASONABLY RELIABLE FRIEND TO MY FRIENDS. AND AS FOR THE REST, IN WORKING, I THINK MY ASSOCIATES KNOW THAT WHATEVER HAPPENS IS DONE FOR AN OBJECTIVE AND NOT FOR HARASSMENT. AND THOSE WHO HAVE STAYED WITH ME HAVE ALMOST INVARIABLY BECOME CLOSE FRIENDS.

"Q: YOU ARE SAID TO BE A REASONABLY DEMANDING TASKMASTER.

"KISSINGER: EXTREMELY DEMANDING. BUT, FIRST OF ALL, I DON'T DEMAND ANYTHING OF MY ASSOCIATES THAT I DON'T DO TO MYSELF. SECONDLY, I HAVE HIGH STANDARDS. I BELIEVE THAT IT IS THE TASK OF PEOPLE IN CHARGE OF AN ORGANIZATION TO DISCOVER QUALITIES IN THEIR SUBORDINATES THEY DIDN'T KNOW THEY HAD, AND THEREFORE I HAVE FOUND VERY OFTEN THAT PEOPLE DO THINGS THAT WORK FOR ME THAT THEY HAVE NEVER DONE IN OTHER JOBS. DO I LOSE MY TEMPER? YES. USUALLY I LOSE MY TEMPER MORE ON TRIVIAL THINGS THAN ON BIG THINGS.

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"Q: THEY SAY YOU THROW WASTE BASKETS AND KICK ASHTRAYS...

"KISSINGER: THAT IS NOT TRUE. I DON'T THROW OBJECTS. I BECOME VERY IMPATIENT WHEN WHAT I CONSIDER TRIVIAL OBSTACLES GET IN THE WAY OF THINGS THAT I NEED, BELIEVE ME, TO BE DONE.

"Q: HOW ABOUT THE LESS TRIVIAL, DISAGREEING PEOPLE, FOR EXAMPLE?

"KISSINGER: ONE OF THE MYTHS IS THAT I LIKE CONFORMISTS. BUT LOOK AT THE PEOPLE I HAVE AROUND ME -- JOE SISCO, HAL SONNENFELDT, TOM ENDERS, CHUCK ROBINSON, WIN LORD.

"Q: THEY ALL TALK BACK?

"KISSINGER: THEY ALL TALK BACK. AND THEY ARE ALL EXTREMELY INDEPENDENT. ONCE A DECISION IS MADE, I BELIEVE THAT THEN EVERYBODY HAS AN OBLIGATION TO CARRY IT OUT.

"Q: WHEN SOMEBODY THAT WORKS FOR YOU DOESN'T COME UP TO YOUR STANDARDS, DO YOU FIRE THEM YOURSELF, OR DO YOU HAVE IT DONE BY SOMEONE ELSE? NOT FIRE -- BUT PERHAPS FIND A BETTER PLACE FOR THEM.

KISSINGER: WELL, AMONG MY CLOSE ASSOCIATES, I HAVE NEVER HAD ANY OCCASION TO FIRE ANYBODY. IN OTHER POSITIONS, IT IS USUALLY DONE BY EAGLEBURGER, WHO IS IN CHARGE OF MANAGEMENT.

"Q: YOU NEVER FIRE ANYBODY --

"KISSINGER: WELL, I DON'T FIRE PEOPLE WHO HAVE WORKED CLOSELY WITH ME. AND I WOULD NEVER FIRE ANYBODY WHO HAS MADE A MISTAKE. BUT ONE SOMETIMES MAKES A MISTAKE IN APPOINTING SOMEBODY THAT ONE HASN'T KNOWN TOO WELL, AND IN A LARGE ORGANIZATION LIKE THIS, THAT HAPPENS OCCASIONALLY.

"Q: HOW DO YOU REACT TO CRITICISM THAT MIGHT COME TO YOU THROUGH THE PRESS OR FROM A PUBLIC SPEECH AT THE HILL OR FROM ANOTHER DIPLOMAT? ARE YOU THIN SKINNED?
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"KISSINGER: IT DEPENDS WHOM IT IS FROM. THERE ARE SOME GROUPS OF PEOPLE FROM WHOM I EXPECT CRITICISM AND THAT HAVE TAKEN FIXED POSITIONS, EITHER FOR POLITICAL REASONS OR IDEOLOGICAL REASONS. THERE ARE OTHERS WHERE I WOULD SUPPOSE IT BOTHERS ME, YES.

"Q: DO YOU HAVE AN OUTLET FOR THAT?

"SECRETARY KISSINGER: WELL, WHEN I FIRST CAME HERE I USED TO ARGUE WITH CRITICS. I THINK NOW I REALIZE -- AT LEAST I REALIZE INTELLECTUALLY THAT IT IS PART OF THE GAME HERE AND UNAVOIDABLE.

"Q: HAVE YOU EVER SAID OR DONE ANYTHING, EITHER IN THE NSC OR AS SECRETARY OF STATE, THAT YOU DEEPLY REGRET?

KISSINGER: WELL, I HAVE MADE MISTAKES. IT IS INEVITABLE THAT YOU MAKE MISTAKES. I THINK YOU REALLY CANNOT AFFORD TO TORMENT YOURSELF WITH THINGS THAT HAVE HAPPENED IN THESE POSITIONS. YOU MAKE THESE DECISIONS UNDER GREAT PRESSURE, ALMOST ATHLETICALLY -- BECAUSE THE TIME IS PRESSING ON YOU, AND YOU HAVE TO REACT QUICKLY. I DON'T THINK

YOU CAN TORMENT YOURSELF WITH DECISIONS YOU HAVE MADE.

"Q: DO YOU HAVE ANY PROBLEM ADMITTING A MISTAKE?

"KISSINGER: WHEN I FEEL I AM WRONG, I WOULD MAKE AN APOLOGY. ON DECISIONS, WHAT I INVARIABLY DO, WHEN WE CONCLUDE AN EPISODE HERE, WHETHER I BELIEVE IT HAS SUCCEEDED OR FAILED, I GET THE KEY PEOPLE TOGETHER AND HAVE A BRAINSTORMING SESSION ON WHAT WE DID WELL, WHAT WE DID BADLY, WHAT WE COULD HAVE DONE BETTER. AND IN FACT I MAKE THEM MORE OFTEN THAN NOT WRITE CRITIQUES. THAT IS WHAT GOT ME INTO TROUBLE WITH ONE OF THE COMMITTEES. OH, NO -- THAT WAS AN UNASKED FOR -- NO, THAT WAS AN ASKED-FOR CRITIQUE.

"Q: DO YOU HAVE ANY PERSONAL HEROES, PERHAPS MODELS? ONE HEARS THOUSANDS OF TIMES THAT YOU FUNCTION SOMEWHAT LIKE METTERNICH OR CASTELREAGH.

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"KISSINGER: METTERNICH -- I THINK METTERNICH WAS AN EXTREMELY SKILLED DIPLOMAT.

"Q: YOU THINK YOU ARE, TOO, DON'T YOU?

"KISSINGER: YES. BUT I WOULD LIKE TO THINK THAT -- I HOPE TO HAVE CONSTRUCTED MORE THAN HE HAD. I MEAN HE WAS A SKILLFUL MANIPULATOR OF EVENTS THAT HE DIDN'T HELP SHAPE. BUT I GREATLY ADMIRE HIS DIPLOMATIC METHODS.

"Q: WERE HIS GOALS THE SAME AS YOURS? ARE THEY ESSENTIALLY A BALANCE OF POWER?

"KISSINGER: WELL, ANY SERIOUS PERSON THINKING ABOUT SECURITY HAS TO THINK OF BALANCE OF POWER. I KNOW NO GREAT STATESMAN IN HISTORY WHO HAS NOT HAD TO ADDRESS THE QUESTION OF BALANCE OF POWER. THERE CAN BE NO SECURITY WITHOUT BALANCE OF POWER. THE QUESTION IS WHETHER YOU CAN GO BEYOND THE BALANCE OF POWER TO CONCEPTS THAT RELATE NATIONS TO EACH OTHER ON THE BASIS OF JUSTICE AS WELL AS OF POWER. AND THIS IS THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE PERIODS OF CONSTRUCTION AND THE PERIODS THAT SIMPLY MANIPULATE. BUT I REALLY DON'T KNOW ANY LEADING FIGURE IN HISTORY, INTERNATIONAL FIGURE, WHO HAS NOT HAD TO ADDRESS THE QUESTION OF BALANCE OF POWER IN SOME WAY.

"Q: WHO DO YOU SEE AS THE GREATEST PERSONS IN YOUR LIFETIME?

"KISSINGER: DEGAULLE WAS A GREAT FIGURE. FRANKLIN ROOSEVELT. MAO. I MEAN I AM NOT ATTACHING MORAL JUDGMENTS. CHURCHILL, OF COURSE. TO SOME EXTENT ADENAUER.

MY DEFINITION OF GREAT IS SOMEBODY WHO MADE A QUALITATIVE DIFFERENCE IN THE LIFE OF HIS PEOPLE AND WITHOUT WHOM IT WOULD BE DIFFICULT TO IMAGINE THAT THE HISTORY OF HIS PEOPLE WOULD HAVE BEEN THE SAME.

"Q: THE LEGISLATIVE BRANCH IS A REALITY THAT HAS TO BE DEALT WITH -- THE CHECK AND BALANCE BETWEEN THE LEGISLATIVE AND EXECUTIVE BRANCHES, THAT SOMETIMES ALMOST APPROACHES IMPASSE. IS THIS FRUSTRATING TO YOU?
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"KISSINGER: YES, IT IS FRUSTRATING TO ME. BUT IT ISN'T THE CHECKS AND BALANCES THAT IS FRUSTRATING. WHAT IS FRUSTRATING IS THAT IT IS MY CONVICTION THAT YOU CANNOT CONDUCT FOREIGN POLICY EXCEPT ON THE BASIS OF SOME COHERENT SET OF IDEAS. YOU CANNOT SEGMENT FOREIGN POLICY INTO A SERIES OF ISOLATED DECISIONS. ON THE OTHER HAND, THE LEGISLATIVE BRANCH, EVEN WITH THE BEST INTENTIONS, CAN ONLY ADDRESS INDIVIDUAL PROBLEMS. AND THEY THEREFORE CAN MAKE DECISIONS THAT HAVE CONSEQUENCES FAR BEYOND THOSE WHICH THEY INTEND. BUT THEN WE HAVE TO PICK UP THE PIECES AND THEY GO ON TO SOMETHING ELSE. I AM AFRAID THAT WE ARE GOING TO PARALYZE OUR FOREIGN POLICY IF THE CONGRESS TAKES OVER THE CONDUCT OF FOREIGN POLICY, WHICH IS INCREASINGLY THE CASE. AND WE HAVE TO FIND OUT -- I COMPLETELY AGREE WITH THE EDITORIAL IN YOUR PAPER TODAY -- THERE HAS TO BE FOUND A DISTINCTION BETWEEN SUPERVISION OF FOREIGN POLICY, WHICH, HOWEVER PAINFUL IT MAY BE, IS IMPORTANT, AND THE CONDUCT OF FOREIGN POLICY, WHICH THE CONGRESS CANNOT DO.

"Q: DO YOU HAVE A RELIGIOUS, SPIRITUAL OR PHILOSOPHICAL ETHIC THAT YOU FOLLOW?

"KISSINGER: WELL, I BELIEVE THAT UNLESS -- THE ONLY WAY ONE CAN MAKE THE DIFFICULT DECISIONS THAT HAVE TO BE MADE IN THESE POSITIONS IS FROM A BASIS OF SOME RATHER DEEPLY HELD VALUES. AND STRANGELY ENOUGH, I BELIEVE THAT TACTICAL FLEXIBILITY REQUIRES STRONG MORAL CONVICTION, AND THAT THOSE WHO HAVE NO CONVICTION CAN ALSO NOT BE VERY FLEXIBLE BECAUSE EVERYTHING THEN BECOMES A NEW PROBLEM FOR THEM.

"Q: WHEN YOU ARE NO LONGER SECRETARY OF STATE -- WHAT WOULD YOU MOST LIKE TO DO?

"KISSINGER: I HAVE ABSOLUTELY NO PLANS. I HAVE NEVER DISCUSSED THIS WITH ANYBODY OUTSIDE -- I HAVE NEVER DISCUSSED IT. I THINK AFTER I LEAVE I WILL HAVE TO TAKE A MONTH OR TWO TO DECOMPRESS. AND I HOPE THAT IN THAT PERIOD I WILL HAVE AN OPPORTUNITY TO DISCUSS IT.

"Q: DO YOU HAVE A BOOK IN YOU, AS WE SAY?
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"KISSINGER: WELL, EVERYBODY SAYS THAT I AM GOING TO SPEND MY TIME WRITING MY MEMOIRS. I HAVE AGAIN NOT DISCUSSED THIS WITH ANY PUBLISHER. I SUPPOSE I OUGHT TO WRITE MY ACCOUNT OF THE PERIOD, BECAUSE THERE ARE MANY EVENTS IN WHICH I WAS UNIQUELY INVOLVED AND FOR WHICH THE DOCUMENTATION COULD THEREFORE BE UNEVEN. I CANNOT IMAGINE MYSELF SPENDING MY LIFE AS A WRITER. AND THEREFORE, I HAVE TO FIND SOMETHING ELSE TO DO, EXCEPT TO WRITE. BUT WHAT THAT SOMETHING ELSE IS, I DON'T KNOW." (END STAR TRANSCRIPT)

YOU WILL NOTE THAT MOST OF O'LEARY'S QUESTIONS HAVE BEEN SHORTENED OR REWRITTEN. THE QUESTION AND ANSWER ON TOP OF PAGE 6 OF DEPARTMENT'S TRANSCRIPT (DEALING WITH PHILOSOPHICAL ETHIC) HAS BEEN INSERTED AFTER SECRETARY'S ANSWER ON PAGE 15 OF DEPARTMENT'S TEXT.

THE QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS DEALING WITH PERSONALITY (PAGES 1 AND 2 OF DEPARTMENT'S TRANSCRIPT), PHILOSOPHERS AND RELIGION (PAGES 6 AND 7), THE SECRETARY STAMINA (PAGE 8), WEIGHT AND EXERCISE (PAGE 9), AND THE QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS DEALING WITH WHETHER HE HAD EVER THOUGHT ABOUT BECOMING SECRETARY, FATALISM, WEAKNESSES, MARRIAGE, MUSIC, WHAT HE READS, CHRISTMAS GIFTS (PAGES 17-22) HAVE BEEN EDITED OUT.

IF THE SECRETARY WISHES TO MAKE ANY CHANGES, DELETIONS OR ADDITIONS TO THE ABOVE WASHINGTON STAR TRANSCRIPT, S/PRS NEEDS TO KNOW BY NOON SATURDAY, DECEMBER 27. OTHERWISE, THE INTERVIEW WILL BE PUBLISHED AS ABOVE IN THE SUNDAY STAR.

S/PRS WILL PRESS RELEASE THE INTERVIEW AND NEEDS TO KNOW WHETHER THE SECRETARY WANTS THE COMPLETE TRANSCRIPT PUT OUT OR THE STAR'S EDITED VERSION. PLEASE ADVISE.

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